

# City of Chicago Street Layout and Numbering System

Patrol Procedures Hour 1



Information on how to locate addresses in Chicago

## Street layout

Chicago's streets primarily follow the grid system established by the Chicago Board of Aldermen in 1908 and implemented on September 1, 1909. All addresses are numbered outward from baselines at State Street, which runs North and South, and Madison Street, which runs East and West. Street numbers begin at "1" at the base lines and ascend numerically to the city limits. Letters (N, S, E, or W) indicate directions.

The city of Chicago is divided into one-mile sections which nearly everywhere contain exactly 8 blocks to the mile. Every average block is assigned a new series of 100 numbers. Therefore, each 800 in numbers is one mile. (North-south blocks in and just south of downtown are an exception to the 800-to-a-mile rule: Madison (0 N/S) to Roosevelt (1200 S) is one mile, as are Roosevelt to Cermak (2200 S) and Cermak to 31st Street (3100 S). The normal 800 rule resumes south of 31st Street so that Pershing Road (3900 S) is one mile south of 31st.)

The blocks are normally counted out by "hundreds," so that Chicagoans routinely give directions by saying things like "about one thousand north on Western" or "around twenty-four hundred west on Augusta" (which both describe locations near the intersection of Western Avenue (2400 W) and Augusta Boulevard (1000 N)).

South of Madison Street most of the east-west streets are simply numbered. The street numbering is aligned with the house numbering, so that 95th Street is exactly 9500 South. "Half-block" east-west thoroughfares in this area are numbered and called places; 95th Place would lie just south of and parallel to 95th Street, and just north of 96th Street.

Every four blocks (half-mile) is a major secondary street. For example, Division Street (1200 N) is less important than either Chicago Avenue (800 N) or North Avenue (1600 N), but is still a major thoroughfare. However, this is not always the case, especially on the city's Far North Side: Peterson Avenue (6000 N) is a more heavily trafficked street than Bryn Mawr Avenue (5600 N), which sits exactly at the 7-mile marker.

Even-numbered addresses are found on the north and west sides of a street, and odd numbers are found on the south and east sides, irrespective of the streets' position relative to the corner of State and Madison. Diagonals, even if they were to run exactly 45 degrees off of the cardinal directions, are numbered as if they were north-south or east-west streets.

The northernmost street in Chicago is Juneway Terrace, just north of Howard Street. The southern boundary is 138th Street. The eastern boundary of Chicago is Avenue A, and the furthest west the city extends is in the portion of O'Hare Airport that lies in DuPage County, just east of Elmhurst/York Road.

## MAJOR STREETS

East-West Streets		North-South Streets	
Coordinate	Street name	Coordinate	Street name
9600 N	Golf		
8800 N	Dempster	8800 W	East River
8000 N	Oakton	8000 W	Pacific
7200 N	Touhy	7200 W	Harlem
6400 N	Devon	6400 W	Narragansett
5600 N	Bryn Mawr	5600 W	Central
4800 N	Lawrence	4800 W	Cicero
4000 N	Irving Park	4000 W	Pulaski
3200 N	Belmont	3200 W	Kedzie
2400 N	Fullerton	2400 W	Western
1600 N	North	1600 W	Ashland
800 N	Chicago	800 W	Halsted
0 N/S	Madison	0 E/W	State
1200 S	Roosevelt	800 E	Cottage Grove
2200 S	Cermak	1600 E	Stony Island
3100 S	31st	2400 E	Yates
3900 S	Pershing	3200 E	Brandon
4700 S	47th	4000 E	Avenue C
5500 S	55th		
6300 S	63rd		
7100 S	71st		
7900 S	79th		
8700 S	87th		
9500 S	95th		
10300 S	103rd		
11100 S	111th		
11900 S	119th		
12700 S	127th		

### Grid of Major Streets

[illegible]

## House Numbers

On Streets running north and south, odd numbers are on the east side and even numbers are on the west side of the streets. On streets running east and west, odd numbers are on the south side and even numbers on the north side of the street.

All buildings were numbered beginning at Madison and State Streets, making the business and retail heart of Chicago the center of the new system. The clean geometry of straight lines and right angles guaranteed uniformity in numbering. Throughout Chicago, the "twenty-four hundred block" is just west of Western Avenue, while the 3200 block is just west of Kedzie. House numbers rise by 800 every mile, or 100 per long block, except on the South Side, where numbered streets retained their uneven spacing from Madison to 31st Street (where the first three "mile" intervals are at 12th, 22nd, and 31st Streets).

## City block

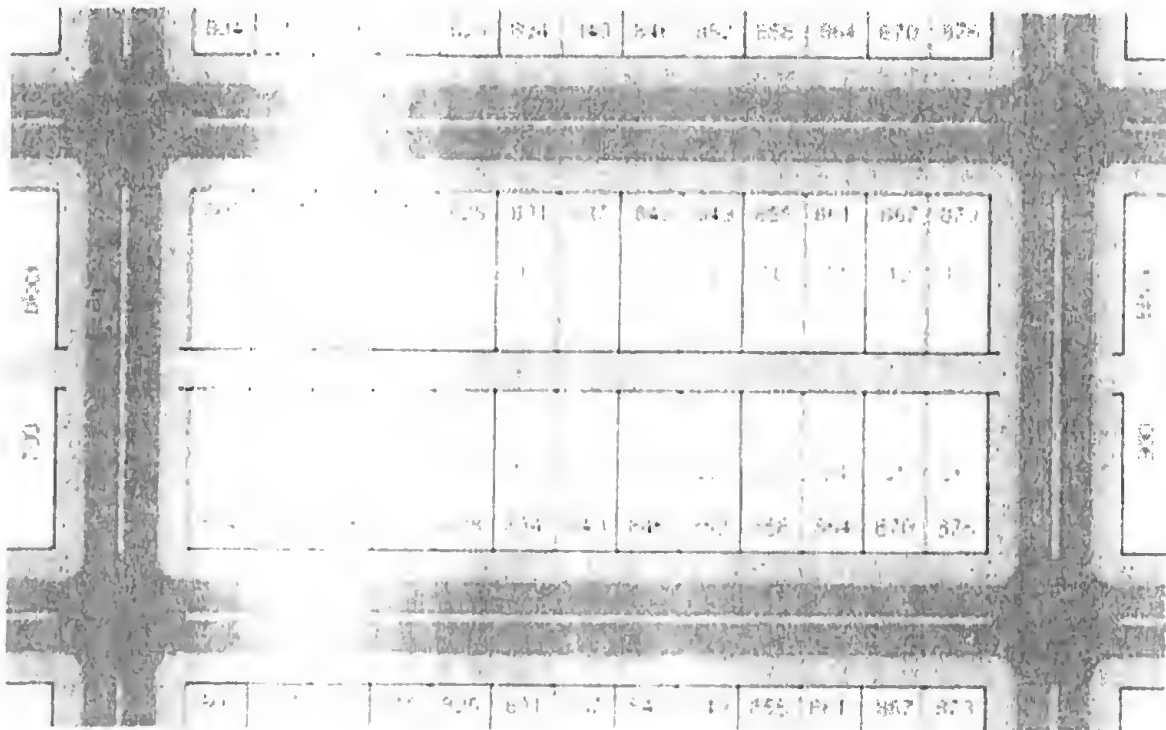


Diagram of an example of a rectangular city block as seen from above, surrounded by streets. The addresses on this example 800 block are shown in black and the adjacent blocks are the 700 and 900 blocks. An alley shown in light gray runs lengthwise down the middle of the block. Streets are shown in dark gray. Sidewalks are shown in light gray. Parkways are shown in green with walkways shown in light gray from every lot to the street.

Which side of the street will you find the house with the address of  
1523 South Loomis Street ?



Which side of the street will you find the house with the address of  
1520 West Jackson Blvd.?



Which side of the street will you find the house with the address of  
1505 West Adams Blvd.?



Which side of the street will you find the house with the address of  
312 South Laflin Street ?



## Street names

While all north-south streets within city limits are named, rather than numbered, smaller streets in some areas are named in groups all starting with the same letter; thus, when traveling westward on a Chicago road, starting just past Pulaski Road (4000 W), one will cross a mile-long stretch of streets which have names starting with the letter K, giving rise to the expression "K-town." These streets are found approximately in the 11th mile west of the Indiana state line, and so begin with the 11th letter of the alphabet. A mile later, just past Cicero (4800 W), the starting letter changes to L, and mile by mile the letters progress up to P. The areas that might otherwise be the A through J groups are the older parts of the city where street names were already well established before this system was developed (although some small groups of streets seem to have been given names intended to conform to the system), and the Q group (8800 to 9600 W) would fall west of the city, as the only land in Chicago west of 8800 West is O'Hare Airport, undeveloped forest preserve, and a small strip of land connecting O'Hare to the rest of the city and containing only Foster Avenue.

On the far southeast side of the city, Avenue A (4100 E) lies just west of the Illinois-Indiana state line. Lettered avenues mark each block through Avenue O (3432 E), which is a major street of southeast side communities such as Hegewisch.

See also Etymologies of place names in Chicago, Illinois.

### Streets in Chicago

- East of State Street** Columbus Drive (254 E) • Magnificent Mile, Michigan Avenue (100E) • Prairie Avenue (300E) • Stony Island Avenue (1600E)  
(0E/W)
- West of State Street** Halsted Street (800W) • LaSalle Street (150W) • Pulaski Road (4000W) • Western Avenue (2400W)
- North of Madison Street** Belmont Avenue (3200N) • Chicago Avenue (800N) • Devon Avenue (6400N) • Diversey Parkway (2800N) • Division Street (1200N) • Foster Avenue (5200N) • Hubbard Street (430N) • Lake Street (200N) • North Avenue (1600N) • Oak Street (1000N) • Randolph Street (150N)  
(0N/S)
- South of Madison Street** 95th Street (9500S) • Cermak Road (2200S) • DeKoven Street (1120S) • Maxwell Street (1330S) • Roosevelt Road (1200S)
- Angle Streets: Archer Avenue • Blue Island Avenue • Broadway Street • Clark Street • Grand Avenue • Lake Shore Drive • Lincoln Avenue • Milwaukee Avenue • Rush Street • Sheridan Road • Wacker Drive

References/Sources: Chicago Historical Society at <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org>  
[http://www.chicagohomeestates.com/info/chicago\\_street\\_guide](http://www.chicagohomeestates.com/info/chicago_street_guide)

